

Albert Mertz+

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Stalke Galleri
Kirke Sonnerup
07.05.05 to 23.06.05

Curated by **Peter Holst Henckel**

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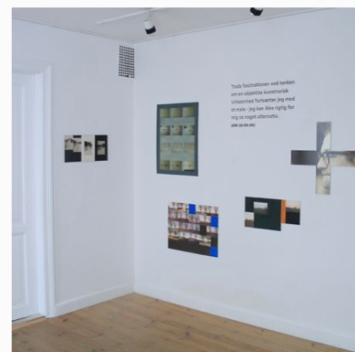
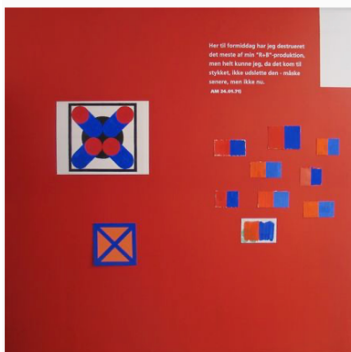
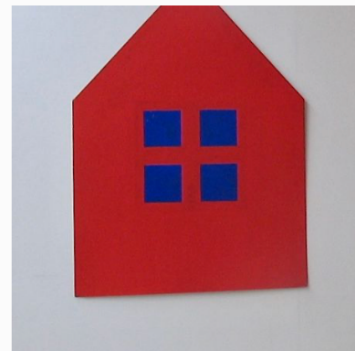
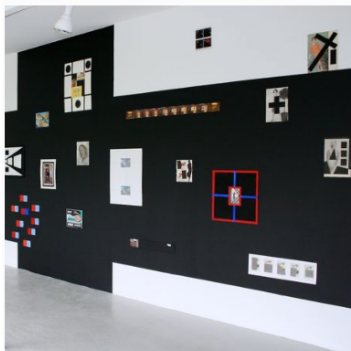
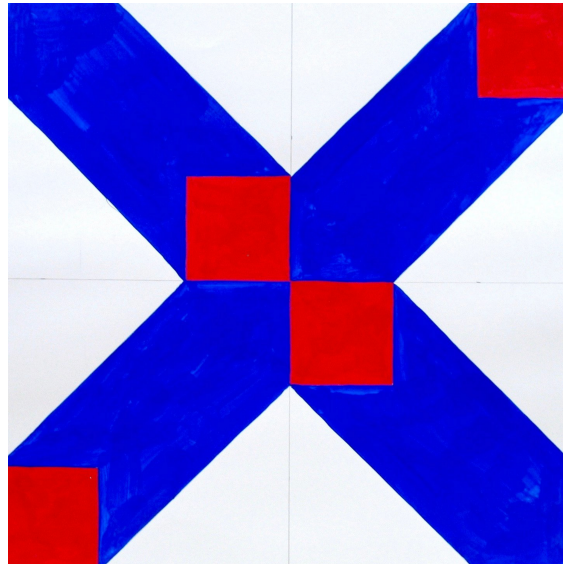
Mertz+ was conceived as a modest attempt to introduce new aspects of Albert Mertz's artistic oeuvre. For the first time, some of the exhibited works were presented publicly, while others had previously been shown but were here seen from a new perspective. Parallel to the exhibition, a 24-page catalogue was published, supplementing and supporting the exhibition's perspectives through images, text, and layout.

In both the exhibition and the catalogue, three perspectives—or vanishing lines—were established, each seeking to encircle key aspects of Mertz and his art. In the exhibition, this circumscription was demonstrated through the hanging of the works and the distribution of space. Both the catalogue and the exhibition were prepared by the artist Peter Holst Henckel (b. 1966).

Peter Holst Henckel wrote about Mertz:

Upon his death on December 30, 1990, Mertz left behind an extensive production of gouaches, montages, collages, and paintings, as well as an important body of sketches, writings, and notes. Discovering this extraordinary oeuvre proved to be a remarkable experience. In particular, the correspondence between Mertz's artistic production and his theoretical reflections was enlightening. Together, they offered a profound insight into one of the most significant figures in Danish art. Despite his modest and reserved stature, Mertz was an important and inevitable presence in modern Danish art and, it was maintained, in international art as well.

Albert Mertz was a highly productive artist. He began early—having been admitted to the academy of fine arts at the age of sixteen—and continued throughout his life to investigate and challenge art. His practice extended across all genres, media, and forms. He maintained that art was not defined by appearance or by specific objects, but by the effect it had on the viewer. Art, therefore, had to engage with the contemporary and challenge it. Early on, Mertz worked with film, later expanding into video and television. Throughout his career, he consistently added something more—both qualitatively and quantitatively. In this sense, he was regarded as a generous artist. An artist+.



Exhibition views from Mertz+, Albert Mertz (2005) at Stalke Galleri, Kirke Sonnerup.



The opening

The exhibition Mertz+ presented a focused introduction to lesser-known and newly contextualized aspects of Albert Mertz's artistic practice. Several works were shown publicly for the first time, while others were reconsidered from new perspectives. Both the exhibition and the accompanying catalogue were structured around multiple interpretative viewpoints, reflected in the spatial organization of the works and the overall curatorial approach.

Albert Mertz was an exceptionally productive and wide-ranging artist whose practice encompassed painting, collage, montage, film, writing, and theoretical reflection. Throughout his life, he continuously challenged conventional definitions of art, refusing to limit himself to a single medium, style, or form. For Mertz, art was defined less by appearance or objecthood than by its effect on the viewer and its engagement with contemporary reality.

A central aspect of Mertz's work was his sustained investigation of the relationship between art and reality. Rather than equating art with reality, he understood art as a way of being in the world — an optic or interface through which reality could be perceived anew. This perspective informed both his conceptual strategies, such as the Red+Blue Proposition, and his later, more intimate works exploring everyday objects, textures, and processes.

Mertz's artistic trajectory was marked by constant curiosity and restlessness. He moved freely between disciplines and visual languages, drawing inspiration from modernism, conceptual art, mass media, and Eastern philosophy, while maintaining a distinctly personal and rigorous approach. His work balanced strict formal systems with openness, intuition, and experimentation.

Although Albert Mertz did not gain significant international recognition during his lifetime, his influence on Danish art and subsequent generations of artists was substantial. Mertz+ aimed to reintroduce his work, highlighting its breadth, depth, and continued relevance, and to offer new insights into an oeuvre that remains rich, challenging, and far from fully explored.

Based on text by Peter Holst Henckel, Mertz+exhibition catalogue



MERTZ +,

'Stalke Galleri, Curated by Peter Holst Henckel, 2005 Text By Peter Holst Henckel,
Stefanie Hering Grafisk Design:Kristian Jacobsen
Publisher Stalke Galleri/Sam Jedig and Stalke, 2005

Edition, ISBN-87-90538-25-0

Pages: 28



"In Danish art you are allowed to use your hands but never your head."
Albert Mertz, 1987. Quoted in MERTZ+ exhibition catalogue.